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Saint Helena

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 11 January 2012. Further details are contained in previous working papers available from http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administrative Power: Governor Mark Capes (October 2011).

Geography: Saint Helena is a small island of volcanic origin, situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 km from Angola and 2,900 km from Brazil. Ascension lies 1,200 km to the north-west of Saint Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands lie approximately 2,400 km to the south of Saint Helena.

Land area: 310 km^2, consisting of the islands of Saint Helena and Ascension and the Tristan da Cunha group.

Exclusive economic zone: 1,641,294 km^2.[a]

Population: Saint Helena: 4,000; Ascension: 880; Tristan da Cunha: 265 (2011 estimates).

Language: English.

Capital: Jamestown.

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Most recent: November 2009; next: November 2013.

Legislature: Unicameral legislative assembly (15 seats, 12 elected members).

Gross domestic product per capita: US$ 2,291 (2000/01 estimate).

Economy: Fishing, coffee, tourism, financial assistance from the United Kingdom (about 80 per cent of annual budgetary revenues).

Unemployment rate: 12.7 per cent (2001/02 estimate).

Monetary unit: Saint Helena pound (SHP).

Brief history: The island of Saint Helena was reportedly discovered in 1502 by a Spanish navigator in the service of Portugal and by the end of the sixteenth century had become a port of call for ships en route from Europe to the East Indies. In 1633, it was formally annexed by the Netherlands; however, in 1659 the British East India Company took possession of the island.

[a] Exclusive economic zone data from the Sea around Us Project, a collaboration between the University of British Columbia and the Pew Environment Group (www.seaaroundus.org).

I. Constitutional, legal and political developments

1. The current Constitution for Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha entered into force in September 2009. The new Constitution changes the name of the Territory from "Saint Helena and its Dependencies" to "Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha" giving the three islands equal status within the Territory. The Head of the Government of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha is the Governor, appointed by the British Crown. However, the ability of the Governor to act inconsistently with the wishes of elected Councillors is curtailed in comparison with the previous Constitution. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 provides for the grant of British citizenship to "British overseas territory citizens".

2. The Constitution provides protection for fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, including protection of the right of life, protection from inhumane treatment, protection from slavery and forced labour, protection of the right to personal liberty, protection of prisoners, the right to marry, children's rights, freedom of conscience, the right to education and freedom of expression, assembly and association.

3. The Legislative Council comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, three ex officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General) and 12 elected members. The Executive Council, which is presided over by the Governor, consists of the ex officio members and five elected members from the Legislative Council. The ex officio members have no vote in either body.

4. Elections are held by secret ballot, at intervals of not more than four years, by universal suffrage for those aged 18 years and over. The most recent general elections were held on 4 November 2009. Twelve nominees (six for each constituency) were duly elected. The new Legislative Council met formally on 13 November and elected the five elected members of the Executive Council and Chairs for each of the eight Council Committees. An election for a new Executive Council took place on 7 November 2011, at the midpoint of the terms of office of the current Legislative Council. The Council is due for dissolution on or before November 2013, with the next general election taking place shortly thereafter.

5. The new Constitution contains enhanced provisions for ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive organs of the Government. The judicial system comprises a Court of Appeal, a Supreme Court and such subordinate courts (currently a Magistrates' Court and provisions for coroner's enquiries into sudden deaths) as may be established by ordinance. There remains a final appeal to the Privy Council of the United Kingdom in prescribed circumstances.

II. Budget

6. Due to a shrinking tax base, owing in part to migration and an ageing population, Saint Helena is heavily dependent on the United Kingdom and other external sources for funding. Budgetary support from the United Kingdom is used to provide essential public services and to subsidize the dedicated shipping service of the Territory. Much of the capital investment is funded through the Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Union.

7. According to information provided by the United Kingdom, total budgetary aid, development assistance and shipping support from the Government of the United Kingdom was £21.49 million for the 2010/11 fiscal year, compared to £26.15 million during the previous period, representing a 17.8 per cent decrease. The 2011/12 aid package was approved in May 2011, following a visit to Saint Helena by DFID representatives. It was decided during that visit that the next three-year budget review would take place in February 2012.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

8. The economy of Saint Helena depends largely on financial assistance from the United Kingdom, which makes up about 80 per cent of annual budgetary revenues. Approximately 40 per cent of the labour force works within the Government; the next-largest sector for employment is retail and services. The local population also earns income from fishing, raising livestock and selling handicrafts. In June 2011, the Government of Saint Helena conducted a national workforce survey to assess the likely demand for labour during the construction and operation of an airport as well as to provide an indication of gaps in skills and future training needs. Moreover, the labour market strategy for 2012-2014, setting up the policy framework, was presented by the Government along with an implementation plan to ensure the achievement of strategic goals throughout 2014. A midterm review of the strategy will be conducted by the Government in 2013.

9. According to the United Kingdom, the first phase of a public sector modernization programme, which is being funded by DFID, has been completed, and the inception report endorsed, in principle, by the Saint Helena Executive Council. That facilitated the drafting of a project memorandum for submission to DFID to secure funding for the second phase of the programme, which began in the first quarter of 2009. The modernization programme is now in its final year, although a request has been made to extend the project to the end of 2012. During the past year, the programme has focused on supporting the various work streams coming out of the air access Memorandum of Understanding Reform Programme.

B. Development

10. Saint Helena is eligible to receive funds from the European Union. The Territory's allocation from the tenth European Development Fund (2008-2013) is €16.63 million. On Saint Helena, the Fund's allocation will allow for the development of a safer landing facility (including a breakwater, a slipway and a sheltered landing area), improved sea defences in James Bay and road rehabilitation. On Ascension Island, the allocation will be applied to road upgrading. On Tristan da Cunha, it will be used for further harbour improvements, investigation of alternative energy potential, water upgrading, waste management, electricity distribution infrastructure and capacity-building related to the management of the lobster processing plant.

11. Development aid from DFID is provided within a three-year framework. In addition, DFID has funded a major infrastructure review that has led to the

development of a comprehensive plan that identifies Saint Helena's infrastructure requirements over the next 10 to 20 years.

12. In March 2008, a disaster-management capability review, fully funded by DFID, was undertaken in Saint Helena by the Government of the United Kingdom. In February 2009, a disaster management consultant funded by the European Union visited Saint Helena to consolidate the work of the island Disaster Management Committee. Further recommendations are now being carried forward. The disaster management recommendations are being implemented in quarterly meetings led by the Chief of Police in his capacity as the Disaster Management Coordinator for Saint Helena. A joint agency disaster-management live exercise was conducted in January 2012, following the previous successful exercise in November 2010.

C. Fisheries and agriculture

13. Fisheries are an important sector of the economy of Saint Helena. According to the United Kingdom, there are 29 fishing boats with commercial licences, but only about 12 of them fish regularly. The local fishermen sell their catch to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation. Fish purchases for the first half of the financial year 2011/12 were 380.43 tons, compared to 136.1 tons during the same period the previous year. Fish exports from April to August 2011 amounted 491.1 tons, compared to 106.8 tons over the same period the previous year. There has been no take-up of foreign fishing licences since the financial year 2006/07, although those licences have in the past contributed up to 20 per cent of all local revenue. The island's wild fish were the first to receive organic certification from the Soil Association, the leading campaigning and certification organization of the United Kingdom for organic food and farming.

14. Saint Helena has developed a reputation for the high quality of its coffee. The island's product is considered one of the finest premium coffees in the world. Owing to problems in the coffee sector, however, very little coffee has been exported recently.

15. With regard to farming, the 2011/12 agricultural support programme provided support in the following areas: irrigation, storage and production infrastructure, and banana, coffee, seed potato, pork and poultry production. The overall aim of the agricultural improvement scheme is to sustain and, where possible, increase agricultural production.

D. Transport and utilities

16. Access to Saint Helena is provided by the RMS Saint Helena, which serves Saint Helena, Ascension and Cape Town, South Africa. Saint Helena's only port, Jamestown, provides good anchorage, although it lacks safe landing facilities that would allow passengers of large cruise vessels to come ashore in all types of weather. It is hoped that the construction of a jetty in Rupert's Bay, in connection with air access development, will enable the separation of cargo and passenger operations in the future.

17. An airport is planned on Saint Helena. In July 2010, the Secretary of State for International Development announced that the Government of the United Kingdom

would be willing to finance an airport on Saint Helena, subject to strict conditions being met, including the negotiation of acceptable price, the mitigation of cost risks and time overruns, the approval of the airport design using a shorter runway and the undertaking by the Government of Saint Helena of reforms necessary to open the island's economy. On 3 November 2011, the Government of the United Kingdom announced that the conditions had been met and that it had entered a contract with Basil Read in the amount of £201.5 million for the design and construction of the airport on Saint Helena. The contract also included up to £10 million in shared risk contingency and £35.1 million for 10 years of operation.

18. According to media reports, a technology called an "engineered material arresting system" will be employed to allow a new kind of runway that will allow the airport to receive larger aircraft on its short runway, which is likely to be a little more than one mile long. The project will involve a small airport building, a short runway, connecting roads, a small harbour terminal and ancillary works, as well as the installation of air-traffic control systems. Current plans call for the airport to be ready by 2015. The airport should eventually make the island financially independent, and not reliant on funding from the United Kingdom.

19. The Territory has approximately 168 km of paved roads (Saint Helena 118 km, Ascension 40 km, Tristan da Cunha 10 km) and 30 km of unpaved roads (Saint Helena 20 km and Tristan da Cunha 10 km).

20. Saint Helena has two local radio stations, as well as satellite television stations rebroadcast terrestrially. Ascension has one local radio station and receives relays of broadcasts from Saint Helena. Broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) are available, as well as television services for the United States military. Tristan da Cunha has one local radio station and receives BFBS television and radio broadcasts. There were 831 Internet subscribers in Saint Helena and 310 subscribers in Ascension as at 1 November 2011.

21. Under the DFID-funded electricity distribution project, work has been under way to upgrade and extend the island's electricity distribution system. A further project will include the refurbishment of the power station and the generators, as well as the installation of additional wind turbines. The water collection, treatment and distribution network is currently under review, and DFID funding is available to ensure that any high-priority works can be implemented. Further joint funding by DFID and the European Union is available to refurbish some of the major roads across Saint Helena. It is hoped that landfill disposal systems for domestic and commercial solid waste, which are currently positioned too near the proposed airport, can be relocated using DFID funding.

E. Banking and credit

22. In December 2008, new ordinances on financial services and money-laundering came into force. The bills aim to ensure that Saint Helena complies with international obligations, while safeguarding Saint Helenians from fraudulent financial service providers.

F. Tourism

23. In 2010, DFID approved £1.2 million for the tourism development project on Saint Helena. The project provides, among other things, for enhanced marketing and promotion, improved destination management and community-driven projects linked with tourism.

24. The United Kingdom believes that the new airport is the best way to bring new financial opportunities to the island and promote tourism. At present, about 2,000 visitors per year make the trip to Saint Helena by ship. With the airport, it is estimated that more than 29,000 tourists will visit the island each year. The rugged natural beauty of the Territory, its rare wildlife and its historic sites, such as Napoleon's tomb, are expected to attract visitors. With the construction of an airport, it is estimated that tourist expenditure on the island will grow from £707,000 in 2009/10 to £9,840,000 in 2021, and stimulate growth in the wider economy.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

25. Following the reintroduction of the granting of British citizenship to Saint Helenians in 2002, the islands experienced an exodus, which subsequently has slowed. The majority of Saint Helenians returning to settle on the islands are of retirement age, thus exacerbating the already heavily skewed age profile of the population. According to the United Kingdom, this trend may reverse, however, now that air access is imminent. Approximately 17 per cent of the population resides in Jamestown. According to DFID, there is a high percentage of female-headed households on Saint Helena as a result of labour migration, which has split up families. Currently about 25 per cent of children living in Saint Helena have one or more parents living abroad.

26. Measured by international standards, Saint Helena is a middle-income Territory with few signs of real material poverty. This is largely the result of the all-encompassing Government safety net, which guarantees everyone a minimum standard of living, and of social networks that encourage the distribution of income among kin, most notably in the form of remittances.

27. According to media reports, Saint Helena achieved two top-10 rankings — eighth in both best quality of life and best direct foreign investment strategy — in the African Countries of the Future 2011/12 ranking made by fDi Intelligence.

28. The ageing population of the Territory, with 22 per cent over 65 years of age, has created an increasing need for substantial investment in a new elderly care programme. To this end, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal Community Care Centre, funded by DFID, was opened in 2008. A revised policy for home-care support took effect in mid-November 2010. The policy allows older people to live in their own homes for as long as possible and provides for the support to assist them with the activities of daily living. According to the United Kingdom, in April 2011 the new Social Security Ordinance came into force which provides for the payment of income-related benefits to the poorest households on the island. This legislation

also provides for the introduction of a benefit called the "basic island pension", which is available to people aged 65 and over who are able to demonstrate that they worked a minimum of 20 years on Saint Helena. At the end of November 2011, 550 persons were receiving a basic island pension.

29. The Child Welfare Ordinance came into force in March 2010. The new legislation changes the strategic management structure for safeguarding children and young people on Saint Helena. New policies and procedures have been developed for child protection and safeguarding the welfare of children. The legislation fulfils Saint Helena's obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

30. In January 2009, the Executive Council approved a new health and social services strategy for Saint Helena, entitled "Focusing on the future", to guide the development of the Public Health and Social Services Department until 2012. DFID has agreed to inject almost £2 million into the project over its duration, subject to the achievement of certain milestones throughout its implementation.

31. There is one general hospital in Jamestown and five health clinics serving people living in rural areas. In addition, two units cater to clients with challenging behaviour problems and learning disabilities.

B. Employment

32. The public sector employs about 40 per cent of the workforce in Saint Helena. The Government of Saint Helena has been looking at standards of practice in employment in anticipation of the economic changes that are expected because of the construction of the airport. Legislation was passed in 2010 with provisions relating to employment and the rights of employees and to create a framework for the enforcement of such rights. These rights relate to a written statement of particulars, provision for working time regulations, unfair dismissal, entitlement to unpaid parental leave and unpaid leave to care for dependants, and provision for a minimum wage. In addition, the Government has indicated that it intends to enact new legislation to regulate the terms and conditions under which people are employed by businesses and other organizations in Saint Helena. The subjects expected to be covered include paid holiday and rest breaks, limits on night work, maternity and paternity pay, redundancy pay and protection from unauthorized deductions from pay, as well as the right to belong or not to belong to a trade union or staff association.

33. With a view to correcting anomalies and addressing staff retention that would also encourage and/or facilitate career management, in April 2010, the Government introduced a revised system of fairer pay scales. As a result of successfully meeting the training needs of the unemployed, Saint Helena's number on the Community Work Scheme was reduced from 176 in 2003 to 18 at the end of 2010. The Scheme was abolished in March 2011 for budget-related reasons.

34. Offshore employment has steadily increased and, with it, remittances to the Territory. Approximately one quarter of the island's workforce is employed on Ascension, in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) or in the United Kingdom. Remittances passing through the Government of Saint Helena Finance Department during 2009/10 decreased to £811,145, compared to £845,280 during 2008/09. The

amount does not necessarily represent the total remittances for that year, since direct transfers can be made to the Bank of Saint Helena. The Finance Directorate no longer processes remittances, as these are done via the Bank of Saint Helena.

35. The majority of contracts for offshore employment are for unaccompanied workers, resulting in a significant social burden and dislocation of families. In addition, the loss of trained staff to better-paid offshore employment makes it necessary to bring in a range of internationally recruited staff in a number of sectors. With the construction of an airport scheduled to begin in late 2011, demand for workers is expected to increase significantly. This, however, will create a skills gap on the island, in particular in the elementary and service sector roles.

C. Education

36. Education is compulsory and free for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are currently four schools in operation, comprising three all-through primary schools (for pupils aged 3 to 11 years) and one secondary school for students aged 11 to 18 years. Students over 16 may opt for United Kingdom-accredited academic or vocational courses. Since September 2009, distance learning opportunities have been included in the curriculum of the secondary school. The Education Department is also responsible for the training and retraining of the public and private sector, through the provision of an Adult and Vocational Education Service.

37. Retaining qualified, experienced staff continues to be a challenge. The Education Ordinance 2008 improved the legal framework for providing suitable education to children and also raised the compulsory schooling age from 15 to 16 years. The allowance scheme available to students in year 12 and 13 for attending school has been selected as the first untargeted subsidy to be reformed. Beginning in September 2011, the reform changed the school allowance from an untargeted to a targeted subsidy so that students who come from a household that meets the criteria will still benefit. The Executive Council decided that only those students in years 12 and 13 from a household with a gross annual income of up to £11,000 will qualify for the school allowance. For the year 2011/12, the Government's estimated expenditure on education and employment is £2,221,836, including all of the primary sectors and tertiary education as well as teacher training costs.

D. Environment

38. Saint Helena has an environmental conservation programme aimed at preserving endangered species and the diversity of habitats. The Government actively pursues compliance with its commitments under the Environment Charter, but resource constraints have impeded progress in some areas.

39. The Overseas Territories Environment Programme, funded jointly by DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the Government of the United Kingdom, approved a project for Saint Helena in 2010 entitled "Illustrated field guides to the flora of Saint Helena". On Ascension Island, it approved an endemic plant conservation plan. In Tristan da Cunha, efforts will focus on the control of alien mice and plants at the Gough Island World Heritage Site. Nine further project bids were submitted for the eighth Overseas Territories Environment Programme bidding round in the financial year 2011/12. Out of these, a total of seven projects

were approved. Three of these were for Saint Helena, and were entitled "Securing the endemic wirebird population through invasive predator control", "Creating a mechanized recycling facility at SHAPE, Saint Helena's Active Participation in Enterprise" and "Restoration of a functioning bastard gumwood population". Two projects for Ascension Island were approved: "An ecosystem approach to plant conservation on Ascension Island" and "Status of marine turtles of Ascension Island". Two projects were approved for Tristan da Cunha: "Clearing alien plants from Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island" and "Geo-referenced baseline vegetation survey to allow future monitoring of environmental change".

40. A further rockfall protection project, costing £3.475 million and funded by DFID, was completed at the end of February 2011. The project aimed at mitigating rockfalls from the cliffs above Jamestown and protecting the lives and property of its inhabitants.

41. In January 2012, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom issued a paper entitled "The environment in the United Kingdom's overseas territories: UK Government and civil society support" on the advice and support available to the Territories in areas of its competency, and highlighted the availability of departmental funds for that purpose.

V. Relations with international organizations and partners

42. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are associated with, but not part of, the European Union. The Territory is a member of the South Atlantic Territories Cooperation Forum.

VI. Ascension

A. Constitutional and political status

43. The 2009 Constitution for the Territory removed the notion that Ascension was a "dependency" of Saint Helena; but the islands remain part of a single territory — sharing a Governor, Attorney General and superior courts. The new Constitution enshrines the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms and contains enhanced provisions to guarantee the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive organs of the Government.

44. For the first time, the existence of an Island Council is recognized in the Constitution, with detailed provision to be made by local ordinance. A new Council was elected in February 2011.

45. In June 2010, the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf denied a claim for a continental shelf area beyond 200 nautical miles submitted by the United Kingdom to the Commission, in respect of Ascension Island, in accordance with the provision set out in article 76 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. The Commission concluded that the volcanic pinnacle on which Ascension rests was too slender to generate rights to an extended zone of the submerged continental shelf. The Government of the United Kingdom is considering its response.

B. Economic and social conditions

46. Following a joint meeting between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Ministry of Defence team and the Ascension Island Council regarding the right of abode and property ownership on Ascension, in January 2006, the Government of the United Kingdom announced that there would be no change in its policy and that rights of permanent abode and property ownership would not be granted on Ascension. The issue for the Government of the United Kingdom was one of contingent liabilities that could fall on British taxpayers. Legislation underpinning a land and business policy was enacted in June 2008. It aimed at providing a clear and transparent means of determining the allocation and use of land, as well as a framework for the operation of businesses on the island.

VII. Tristan da Cunha

A. Constitutional and political status

47. Executive authority for Tristan da Cunha is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. A resident Administrator is appointed by and reports to the Governor. The Administrator is advised by an Island Council, led by the Chief Islander and comprising eight elected members (including at least one woman) and three appointed members. Elections are held every three years. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the new Constitution, the Governor continues to have legislative authority over Tristan da Cunha, but for the first time is constitutionally required to consult the Island Council before making any laws.

48. Tristan da Cunha has its own legislation, but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. As a last resort, the laws of England and Wales apply. There is one full-time police officer and two special constables. The Administrator also serves as the Magistrate.

B. Economic and social conditions

49. Tristan da Cunha's economy is based on traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Rock lobster is sustainably fished and exported to the markets in Australia, Japan and the United States of America. Work is in progress to access the European Union market. Tourism from occasional passing cruise ships and the sale of commemorative coins and stamps also bring the island significant income. Government income from these sectors is used to fund health, education and other government services. In 2009/10 the Government of the United Kingdom funded the construction of a post office/museum and a police station on the island. The post office/museum hosts a number of tourism services, which generate additional income for the island.

50. A new lobster plant was completed in July 2009, redressing the hardship caused by the burning of the plant the previous year. A new crane arrived on the island in 2011, making repairs to the harbour wall possible.

51. Access to Tristan da Cunha is possible only by sea and is provided primarily by two vessels operated by the South African company Ovenstone, which holds the fishing concession for Tristan da Cunha lobster, and by the SS Agulhas, a research vessel that services a South African weather station on Gough Island once a year. Between them, they visit Tristan da Cunha 10 times a year, operating a passenger and freight service. The journey between Cape Town and Tristan da Cunha takes around seven days.

52. The harbour can be used only when weather and sea conditions are favourable, and cruise ships are often unable to land passengers. The harbour is not deep enough for visiting ships and is vulnerable to sea storms. Further repairs were carried out between January and April 2011 to remedy damage caused in June 2010.

53. Following the installation of an improved telephone network early in 2007, Tristan da Cunha enjoys improved telecommunications. The United Kingdom funds the line rental charge for this service. Telephone services are reliable and available to all households and an Internet cafe offers islanders limited access to the Internet. Further improvements to the island's telecommunications were made in 2011.

54. Until 2008, Tristan da Cunha's expenditures have been substantially higher than its earnings, leading to a serious drain on reserves. Contributing factors include inexperience in financial management, the amount of capital expenditure needed to maintain such a remote and isolated community and the cost of medical services, including offshore medical treatment for islanders.

55. In 2009, the Island Council set out broad strategies to secure the island's financial future. According to the United Kingdom, even with these reforms, the island will very soon become insolvent, unless further drastic measures continue to be taken. In 2011, a thorough review of budgets was undertaken and strict rules on procurement and expenditure were introduced. As a result, the island is forecasting a surplus of revenue over expenditure in both 2011 and 2012.

56. The Department for International Development (DFID) funds the positions of a resident doctor and Head of Public Works, plus annual dental and biennial optician visits. It has also recently funded a resident Chief Executive Officer, whose priority is to reform the Government and improve performance across the public sector. A nurse trainer is due to arrive in 2012.

57. Pupils leave school at the age of 16 and tend to work in the Government or the fishing sector. They have no opportunity to proceed to further education unless they go abroad. The current staff is, by their own admission, poorly trained. There are no trainee teachers in the pipeline. In September 2009, a DFID-sponsored education adviser began a two-year posting on the island.

58. Tristan da Cunha is successfully implementing a number of conservation projects, with help from its partners, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The Overseas Territory Environmental Programme projects include efforts to remove invasive species from uninhabited islands in the Tristan da Cunha group, and studies on the feasibility of eradicating rodents. There is currently a botanist, funded by the Overseas Territories Environment Programme, carrying out a survey of the plants on Tristan da Cunha. Tristan da Cunha also has a Biodiversity Action Plan to help it to meet its commitments under the relevant Convention.

59. According to the United Kingdom, in March 2011 a bulk carrier ran aground on Nightingale, spilling 1,600 tons of fuel and 65,000 tons of soya. Penguins on both Nightingale and Inaccessible — a World Heritage Site, were affected and the fisheries on both islands were closed. Early indications are that the penguin population was not adversely affected, but scientists are still studying and modelling the long-term impact on the fishery.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

60. Information on political and constitutional developments regarding the status of Saint Helena is reflected under section II.

B. Position of the administering Power

61. According to the record of a meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly (A/C.4/66/SR.2), on 3 October 2011 the representative of the United Kingdom said that the relationship of his Government with its Overseas Territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of each Territory to determine whether it wished to remain linked to the United Kingdom or not. Where independence was an option and was the clear and constitutionally expressed wish of the people of a Territory, his Government would help that Territory to achieve it. Where a Territory wished to retain its link to the United Kingdom, his Government would remain committed to its future development and continued security.

62. The speaker went on to say that the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom had recently announced the Government's new strategy towards the Overseas Territories. The time was not right to embark on further constitutional change. Rather, his Government was focusing on three practical policy goals: to strengthen interaction between the United Kingdom and its Territories; to work with the Territories to strengthen good governance, public financial management and economic planning where necessary; and to improve the support available to the Territories. The implementation of the new strategy would take different forms in each Territory, and a public consultation exercise had been launched in order to encourage the Territories and other stakeholders to contribute their views on priorities. The outcome of the exercise would inform the white paper on the Territories that the British Government intended to publish in 2012. The British Government was committed to allowing each Territory to run its own affairs as far as possible, which entailed responsibilities and good governance on the part of the Territory. The speaker further stressed that "where high standards of probity and governance were not maintained, the United Kingdom did not hesitate to intervene".

IX. Action by the General Assembly

63. On 9 December 2011, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolutions 66/89 A and B, based on the report of the Special Committee transmitted

to the General Assembly (A/66/23) and its subsequent consideration by the Fourth Committee. Section IX of resolution 66/89 B concerns Saint Helena, the operative part of which reads:

The General Assembly ...

1. *Stresses* the importance of the Territory's 2009 Constitution;

2. *Requests* the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter of the United Nations, and, in that regard, calls upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

3. *Requests* the administering Power and relevant international organizations to continue to support the efforts of the territorial Government to address the Territory's socio-economic development challenges, including unemployment, and limited transport and communications infrastructure;

4. *Calls upon* the administering Power to take into account the unique geographical character of Saint Helena while resolving as soon as feasible any outstanding issues related to the airport construction.